

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 10, 2016

Agenda Item: Montana Radio Company LLC Request to Place and Operate Radio Tower on FWP Land

Division: Lands

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Min

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Background:

In 2014 Montana Radio Company (MRC) approached FWP R4 with a request for consideration to place a 499 foot radio tower on the butte above the Great Falls Sport Shooting Complex. The land is owned by FWP. MRC has obtained all pertinent permits and approvals including those from FAA, Cascade County, Malmstrom AFB and is requesting final Commission approval. Region 4 did an Environmental Assessment (EA) and released it for public review and comment. Commissioners endorsed FWP to proceed with due diligence and provide a proposed contract for final approval.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

FWP has provided input to Cascade County, Malmstrom AFB, and has done an EA and provide a 30 day public comment period. Minimal public comment was received (see EA Decision Notice for details). Three comments were received, one opposed, one favored, and one was neutral and more informational. FWP and MRC met with the Great Fall Sport Shooting Complex (GFSSC) members and the options and alternatives were assessed. GRSSC concluded the Tower would not be problematic to the Complex purpose or users. There were no public comments received after Commission endorsement at their December Meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The Commission could deny the request and MRC would need to locate in another location. Commission could approve and FWP and MRC would then enter into a contract for all aspects of constructing, operating, and maintaining a radio tower on FWP property on top of the Butte next to the Great Falls Sport Shooting Complex. If approved by the Commission, all revenue generated from a contractual agreement would be placed in the FWP Real Property Trust account.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP has done due diligence to assure all details are assessed, and has developed a contractual agreement for use of FWP property by MRC. The use will consist of construction, operation and maintenance of a communication tower. The proposed location already has two existing communication towers (approximately 200 feet tall) and a small building present and placing another tower in this location will provide Fort Benton and surrounding communities with radio service and station reception from MRC.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the use of FWP lands for the construction and operation of an am/fm radio Tower on Fish, Wildlife & Parks property adjacent to the Great Falls Sports Shooting Complex, and negotiate a contract between Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Montana Radio Company.